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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0090

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 001730

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CCA
DEPT FOR WHA/CAR - JTILGHMAN
WHA/EPSC - LMARTILOTTA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2017
TAGS: TRAD ETTC PREL JM XL
SUBJECT: JAMAICA: RESPONSE TO CUBA LIBERTAD ACT TITLE III
REQUEST

REF: A. SECSTATE 158768
1B. KINGSTON 1681
1C. 06 KINGSTON 2377

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs James T. Heg for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Post has provided responses to questions listed in reftel A. Post is unaware of any Jamaican investments in Cuba or any Jamaican firm with a commercial presence in Cuba. However, Jamaicans generally oppose U.S. policy towards Cuba, which hampers post's efforts to gather accurate investment data.

12. (SBU) There is no direct bilateral trade agreement between the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and Cuba. There is a CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement signed July 5, 2000 of which Jamaica is a member. Cuba remains a significant export market for Jamaica, with exports of USD 9 million for 2006. Imports for the same period are USD 2.8 million. Jamaican exports include pig feed, garments and scrap metal. Imports from Cuba include copper, cement, clay construction materials, and cigars. The GOJ, through the Export-Import Bank, has an established line of credit with Banco Nacional de Cuba in order to facilitate exports.

13. (C) Although Cuban political involvement in Jamaica was strong at one time, now it has all but disappeared. The Cuban government still provides significant social support through educational scholarships and the occasional deployment of medical personnel. The medical program "Mision Milagro" (Miracle Mission) provides free medical eye care in Cuba to Caribbean residents. The service is used by people with cataracts or other treatable eye conditions. Cuba also provided over four million energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs to households since February, 2006. (Note: the public relations value for Cuba of the light bulb exchange was muted as it is the subject of an ongoing GOJ corruption investigation under which the former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller (PSM) accrued a bill of USD 3.95 million for the distribution of the bulbs. It appears GOJ officials awarded lucrative contracts to distribute the bulbs to two firms recently incorporated by close friends or relatives. The matter had been turned over the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Fraud Investigation Unit. End note).

14. (SBU) Post is unaware of any recent measures taken by the GOJ to advance democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. Post has no evidence that the GOJ has substantially changed its policies or actions toward Cuba in the past year. Jamaica continues to maintain cordial diplomatic relations with Cuba, its close geographical

neighbor. Prime Minister Bruce Golding, of the recently elected Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) led government, released a statement on September 12 saying Jamaica would continue its diplomatic relations with Cuba. Golding stated, "both countries could maintain and deepen their relations on the basis of mutual respect and recognition." Golding made the statement during a meeting with Esteban Laxo Hernandez, Vice President of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba. Golding added, "it was the prerogative of the Cuban people to determine their own internal arrangement and given Jamaica's commitment to a pluralistic democracy, he was satisfied that both countries could expand their relations with due respect for those rights."

¶5. (U) Jamaica has a diplomatic presence in Havana. To post's knowledge, there have been no recent official visits of Cuban or Jamaican representatives. Esteban Hernandez invited PM Golding to Cuba during their September 12 meeting, and Golding accepted, although no date for the visit has been announced.

¶6. (C) Post continues to believe that suspension of the right to bring action in U.S. courts against entities and nationals trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba is necessary to U.S. interests. Singling out Jamaican entities or nationals for prosecution would be counterproductive in achieving other USG objectives. In post's view, proceeding with the implementation of Title III of the Libertad Act would seriously complicate, and perhaps even compromise, our efforts in areas of agreement. Actions against Jamaican nationals would likely provoke a strong response from GOJ.

HEG